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Assalāyana Sutta

The Discourse to Assalāyana | M 93

Theme: Purity is not on account of birth or rebirth

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1 Sutta significance

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY. A brahmin youth approaches the Buddha claiming that the brahmins are the highest class. The Buddha replies by showing in many ways how this could not be possible. For example, the brahmins are born from women, not from the Brahma's mouth (as they claim), and how can they be sure that their line is pure—that any of their ancestors, man or woman, have never coupled with a non-brahmin?

[§§1-3] Some 500 brahmins in Sāvattihī on some business decide that one of them should refute the Buddha on his view that the 4 classes are equitably pure. [§4] They approach the brahmin youth Assalāyana, a Vedic expert, to be their champion, but he refuses, saying that it is a difficult task, but after being pressed, he reluctantly agrees.

[§5] They approach the Buddha, and the debate between the Buddha and their representative Assalāyana begins with the latter claiming that only the brahmins are *the* pure class. [§5.3-4] The Buddha's opening response is that brahmins, like everyone else, are born of *women*. [§6] When Assalāyana is unconvinced, the Buddha tells him that in Yona [3.2], Kamboja [3.3] and the countries beyond the north-western borders, they have only two classes, masters and slave.

[§7] Assalāyana is still unconvinced. The Buddha then explains that *anyone* from any of the 4 classes who commits any of the 10 courses of bad action would be reborn in a suffering state, like everyone else. [§8] Conversely, anyone from any of the 4 classes who does any of the ten courses of good action would be reborn in a happy state, like anyone else.

[§9] When Assalāyana says he is still unconvinced, the Buddha then says that anyone, not just the brahmins, are capable of cultivating lovingkindness. The Buddha continues with two parables: [§10] water washes everyone, not only brahmins, just as clean; [§11] whatever the kind of wood, inferior or superior, it would produce fire and heat all the same.

Next, the Buddha presents arguments based on procreation. [§12] Assalāyana agrees that the offspring of a kshatriya youth and a brahmin maiden would belong to both classes. [§13] The same, thinks Assalāyana, is the case with the child of a kshatriya maiden and a brahmin youth, but [§14] the Buddha counters by saying that if a mare were to mate with an ass, the result is a mule (that is, it is neither a horse nor an ass).

This parable shows that there is no significant difference amongst humans, as there is amongst animals, or in modern terms, all human are biologically and genetically of the same species. When two animals from different species mate, their offspring is genetically a new breed. This point on the oneness of the human species is also highlighted in the Vāseṭṭha Sutta (M 98).¹

Here, the Buddha is alluding to the fact that the kshatriyas are strictly *endogamous*, and would not accept intermarriage.²

[§15-16] In the parable of the two brahmin brothers—one an ordained religious expert but immoral, the other an unordained non-expert but one morally virtuous—Assalāyana then states that it is the latter who is worthy of support by the laity. [§16] It is the virtuous non-expert who should be honoured first in any ritual offering.

[§17] This section seems to suggest that Assalāyana has given a series of unrecorded arguments. There seems to be no record of this in any tradition. Probably, it is simply the Buddha's referring to Assalāyana's failure to rebut his arguments. By agreeing to the supremacy of learning, and to the supremacy of

¹ See **Vāseṭṭha S** esp (M 98,8+9 = Sn 600-611), SD 37.1.

² See **Viḍḍabha Vatthu** (DhA 4.3/1:356-362) & **(Upagantabba) Kula S** (A 9.17) @ SD 37.11 (8).

moral virtue, Assalâyana accepts the very ground for the Buddha's declaration that all the 4 classes are equally pure.³ Finally, Assalâyana agrees with the Buddha.

[§18] The Buddha then relates the past-life story of the dark-complexioned Asita Devala who was scorned and cursed by 7 brahmin seers. However, Devala showed only lovingkindness, so that the more he was cursed, the more radiant he became. When the brahmins realized their error, Devala questioned their notion of class purity, whether they really knew that their forefathers were brahmins all along, not someone from another class. They admitted that they did not. Devala then stressed that birth is not a matter of class, but a conjunction of proper conditions [§18.25-27].

[§§19-23] The Buddha says that even these 7 brahmin seers could not refute Asita Devala. Assalâyana accepts the Buddha's explanations and goes for refuge.

1.2 SUTTA HIGHLIGHTS

1.2.1 The Assalâyana Sutta is significant in that it records all the arguments ever used by the Buddha against the brahmins' claim to class supremacy. Assalâyana is a 16-year-old brahmin student of Sāvathī, learned in the Vedas and related fields. After repeated requests by 500 brahmins to defeat the Buddha in a debate, he visits the Buddha and asks him his response to the claims of the brahmins that they are the highest class, born of Brahmā's mouth.

1.2.2 The Buddha's first asserts the biological unity of mankind, that is to say, all humans, including the brahmins, are born in the same manner, from a mother's womb, that is, biologically, and not from some God's mouth, as claimed. Moreover, when a brahmin mates with a woman from whatever class, their child look just as human as their parents. There is no difference by way of birth amongst humans.

1.2.3 Socially, too, class division is not universal. In Yona and Kamboja, and in the outlying countries [§6], for example, there are only 2 classes: masters and slaves, or lords and servants. Even such a system is not a rigid one, as lordship and slavery depend on economic factors (that is, a wealthy man could own slaves, and a slave could buy his freedom in due course).

1.2.4 Ethically, anyone, brahmin or not, would fare according to their karma: they are reborn in suffering states or joyful states according to their actions. Those who have done evil, whether brahmin or not, would suffer its painful fruits, and those who have done good would enjoy its fruits in due course.

1.2.5 The Buddha then speaks of the spiritual unity of mankind. Anyone, from whatever class, is capable of cultivating lovingkindness; the fuel we burn produces a blazing fire, no matter who lights it; no matter who uses water to wash, the dirt is washed off all the same. There is no special purity for one who makes a fire offering nor is one purified by baptizing himself in a river.

Similarly, even between uterine brothers, if one is learned and good, the other is foolish and immoral, the better one would rightly deserve religious offerings, not the bad one. Spiritually, class is not a hindrance to the holy life. Birth, religious learning and class have no bearing on spiritual growth.

1.2.6 Assalâyana is saddened that he is unable to prove the Buddha wrong. The Buddha then relates how an ancient seer, Asita Devala ("Devala the dark"), was despised and cursed by 7 brahmin seers (on account of the former's complexion). The more the brahmins cursed him, the more radiant his complexion became, until the guilt-ridden brahmins relented, and was instructed by Asita that no one should be despised of his class, as we can never be sure of any pure lineage.

1.2.7 The Buddha closes his instructions by explaining to Assalâyana the nature of human birth, that it has nothing to do with class, but arises when the proper conditions are present. The consciousness that is reborn does not belong to any class. It is simply *consciousness*. On being asked by the Buddha what does Assalâyana think he is now (what class he belongs to), he can only reply, "We know not what we are!" (*na mayam jānāma keci mayam homa*). But he rejoices in the Buddha's teaching and takes refuge.

1.3 RELATED SUTTAS

1.3.1 Parallel texts. The Assalâyana Sutta has a Chinese parallel in the Madhyama Āgama (MĀ 151 @ T1.663b-666c) and another parallel in an individual translation (T71 @ T1.876b-878b).⁴ They all

³ The brahmin Brahmāli gives a similar response, and the audience then marvel and go for refuge: see **Brahmāyu S** (M 91,34+35/2:144), SD 63.8, & T76 & T1.885c9.

agree on the Sutta’s venue as being in Jeta’s Grove near Sāvathī. **Analayo** has done a helpful comparative study of the Pali and its parallels (2011:549-556).

Furthermore, the closing of the Assalāyana Sutta has a counterpart in a discourse in the Ekottarika Āgama and in a sutta quotation in Samatha,deva’s commentary on the Abhidharmakośa, bhāṣyā, extant in Tibetan.⁵ Parts of a version of the Sutta—Assalāyana’s expression of defeat and the account of the 7 brahmin seers—have also been preserved in Sanskrit fragments.⁶

1.3.2 Related suttas. The Assalāyana Sutta and the **Vāseṭṭha Sutta** (M 98 = Sn 3.9) share the same theme: our personal purity is not by birth but by our actions.⁷ The Vāseṭṭha Sutta, however, deals with the subject in greater detail and in a poetically didactic way. The Assalāyana Sutta, on the other hand, employs a series of related arguments to prove the Buddha’s point.

The Khema Sumana Sutta (A 6.49) contains the Buddha’s statement: “Thus, bhikshus, do youths of family declare their direct knowledge (*aññā*): the goal is told but without alluding to a self”⁸ [§2]. Here the expression, “youths of family” (*kula,putta*),⁹ refers to the fact that Khema and Sumana are young monks who come from good families. The point is that age is no barrier to awakening. **The Anāgata, bhaya Sutta 2** (A 5.78) (given in brief in **the Samaya Sutta**, A 3:66) contains a beautiful reflection on the urgency of spiritual practice, even for one who is still young:

The monk reflects: “I am now young. . .but the time will come when old age will touch this body; then it would not be easy to turn to the Buddha Word, or the forest and woodlands, or the solitary dwelling. Before it comes to me, let me attain the unattained, so that I will dwell comforted (*phāsu*) even when I am old.”
(A 5.78/3:103)

The key sentence of the Sutta is clearly that “the goal is told but without alluding to a self” (*attho ca vutto attā ca anupanīto*). It is only the arhat who fully understands the true nature of non-self, that there is no abiding entity. With that understanding, the arhat also does not see others by way of categories, that is, he does not measure anyone or anything. He is free from conceit and complexes.

⁴⁴ According to the Taisho ed, T71 was tr by Dharma, rakṣa. MĀ 151 has the title 梵志阿攝經 (*fàn zhì ā shè hé jìng*) “the discourse to the brahmin Assalayana,” (with a 聖 *shèng* variant reading as 梵志阿攝和經, *fàn zhì ā shè hé hé jìng*). Here 經 *hé* is an archaic form of 和. The Abhidharma,kośa,upāyikā,nāma Ṭīkā (AbhkṬ) gives its title as 梵志阿攝經 *ā śā lā yā na* *rta len gyi bu’i mdo*. T71 has the title 梵志類波羅延問種尊經 (*fànzhì è bō luó yán wèn zhǒng zūn jīng*), “the discourse on the brahmin Assalayana’s questions about class superiority.” On MĀ 151, see Thich Minh Chau, *The Chinese Madhyama Āgama and the Pāli Majjhima Nikāya*, Delhi, 1964:61, 313-320. For a comparative study, see Analayo, *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima Nikāya*, Taipei, 2011:549-556.

⁵ EĀ 40.9 = T2.742b-743a and Abhidharma,kośa,upāyikā,nāma Ṭīkā (Derge ed (4094) mngon pa, ju 110a4-111b5 or Qianlong ed (5595) tu 126a2-128a1); cf Abhidharma,kośa (3.12, Pradhan 1967:121,22+25; 121/22-25, [Gretillied](http://www.gretillied.com)) which parallels M 93.18.26/2:157,1-3, with its Chinese counterparts in T1558 @ T29.44c26+45a1, and T1559 @ T29.201c22+28. EĀ 40.9 and AbhkṬ parallel the account of the 7 brahmin seers at M 93.18/2:154,29 ff.

⁶ According to **Analayo**, the so far unpublished fragments are nos 2380/37 + 2380/44 of the Schøyen collection, identified by Klaus Wille. The fragments correspond to the final part of the debate at M 93.15-18/2:154-155, esp to Assalāyana (Skt Āśvalāyana) showing physical signs of being defeated and to the account of the 7 brahmin seers. (2011:549 n107)

⁷ M 98/2:196 = Sn 3.9/596-656/115-123 & SD 37.1 (1.3.3).

⁸ “The goal is told, but without any reference to the self,” *attho ca vutto attā ca anupanīto* (A 6.49.2/3:359), SD 18.2b. As in **Ājīvaka S** (A 3.72/1:216) = “You have spoken of (man’s) welfare, and self is not brought in question” (A:W 1:198); **Soṇa Koḷivisa Vatthu** (V 1:185) = “the goal is spoken of but the self is not obtruded” (V:H 4:235). Comy to **Ājīvaka S** (A 3.72) takes the phrase to mean, “You have given an answer to my question, but you do not say, ‘I myself have such virtues.’” (AA 2:331).

⁹ “Youth of family,” *kula,putta*, alt trs “son of family, clansman, noble youth.” In **Vakkali S** (S 22.87.39/3:124), SD 8.8 (qv), the Buddha refers to Vakkali posthumously as *kula,putta* instead of *bhikkhu*. Vakkali was prob in his early 20s. The aged Pukkusāti is similarly referred to as *kula,putta* in **Dhātu Vibhaṅga S** (M 140), SD 4.17.3n. See also **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16.5.8ab), SD 9(7g). On other terms denoting “young,” see **Sigāl’ovāda S** (D 31,1.2/-3:180) n, SD 4.1.

There is a deliberate play on the term *upanīta*, which is clearly an allusion to the brahminical rite of *upanīta*, where “a boy is brought near to a Guru and initiated into one of the twice-born classes (by investiture with the sacred thread or other ceremonies)” (SED). In the **Assalāyana Sutta** (M 93), the phrase, *eko ajjhāyako anupanīta* (“one is a reciter, initiated”) occurs in a brahminical context, where *anupanīta* means “uninitiated, not having received brahminical education.”¹⁰

2 Assalāyana

2.1 ASSALĀYANA IN THE PALI TRADITION. Assalāyana was a 16-year-old brahmin student (*māṇava*) of Sāvattthī, who is very learned in the Vedas and related fields [§3.3]. The Pali sources, however, do not mention who his teacher is, although we know the teachers of other brahmin students who debate with the Buddha.¹¹ The Vedic tradition, however, names his teacher as Śaunaka, and that Āśvalāyana himself is a renowned teacher [2.2]. Assalāyana is mentioned in a list of eminent brahmin youths given in the Sutta Nipāta Commentary.¹²

Five hundred brahmins staying in the city coax him to debate with the Buddha and refute his views on class equality. He agrees reluctantly, well knowing that the Buddha is “a Dharma-speaker, and Dharma-speakers are difficult to refute” [§§4.2, 4.4, 4.7], meaning that the Buddha is a wise teacher, well known for his teaching and debating skills.

Assalāyana apparently sees himself only as a spokesman for the brahmins [§6.1], and clearly has some respect for the Buddha [§§4.2, 4.4, 4.7]. As such, there is no “head-splitting” incident (where Vajira, pāṇī threatens to hurl his glowing iron “thunderbolt” at the deceptive or dishonest challenger) here, as found in the **Ambaṭṭha Sutta** (D 3)¹³ and the **Cūḷa Saccaka Sutta** (M 35).¹⁴ Ironically, the reluctant debater is in due course convinced by the Buddha’s teachings, and goes for refuge [§23].

Since the Apadāna and Dhammapāla quote the Sutta, it is possible that Assalāyana is the father of Mahā Koṭṭhita and his mother Canda, vatī. Mahā Koṭṭhita, says Dhammapāla, is converted while listening to the Buddha’s discourse to this father:

My mother is called Canda, vatī,	<i>mātā canda, vatī nāma</i>
my father is Assalāyana,	<i>pitā me assalāyano</i>
while the Buddha trained [educated] my father	<i>yadā me pitaram buddho</i>
in all that is pure.	<i>vinayī sabba, suddhiyā</i>

(ThaA 1:31 quoting Ap 243/2:480)

This notion, however, has a difficulty. It is unlikely that this refers to the Assalāyana Sutta, because in the Sutta, Assalāyana is only 16 years old. We have, however, no other record of teachings to Assalāyana concerning *sabba, suddhi*, meaning “all that is pure” or “the purity of the all.” It should be noted that the name Assalāyana, which is **Āśvalāyana** in Sanskrit, is a well known name in the Buddha’s time, and there are probably many others of this name [2.2].

Buddhaghosa, in his Majjhima Commentary, adds that Assalāyana became a devoted follower of the Buddha, and built a reliquary shrine (*cetiya*) in his own residence for worship. All his descendants, too, down to Buddhaghosa’s day, built similar shrines in their houses (MA 3:412).

2.2 ASSALĀYANA IN THE BRAHMINICAL TRADITION. The Sanskrit form of Assalāyana is **Āśvalāyana**, which was the name of a Vedic teacher (fl 400 BCE), a student of Śaunaka, and the author of the *Āśvalāyana-śrauta-sūtra*, a Vedic manual of sacrificial rituals for the use of the class of priests called *hotar*, or *hotṛ*, whose main function was to invoke the gods. Āśvalāyana belonged to the “forest tradition”

¹⁰ M 93.16/2:154.

¹¹ For a list of “brahmin youths” (*māṇava*) who have met the Buddha, see **Caṅkī S** (M 95) @ SD 21.15 (2.1).

¹² *Assalāyana, vāseṭṭha, ambaṭṭha, uttara, māṇavak’ādāyo* (SnA 1:372).

¹³ D 3, 1.20-21/1:94 f & SD 21.3 (4).

¹⁴ M 35, 13b/1:231 = SD 26.5.

of hermits and itinerant holy men rather than to any priesthood. He is mentioned as a teacher as well as a sage in Vedic litanies and is invoked along with Indra and the “sons of Brahmā.”¹⁵

Considering the dates of Āśvalāyana and of the Buddha, they could have well been contemporaries, and that he is indeed the Assalāyana of M 93. The Sutta describes him, at the time of his meeting with the Buddha, as being a 16-year-old brahmin student who leads a wanderer’s life. If we take the Assalāyana Sutta account of the meeting between Āśvalāyana and the Buddha as being historical, it might be said that surely the Buddha would have some influence on his thinking, practice and works. Such a research must be left to the specialist scholar.

3 Yona, Kamboja and beyond

3.1 TWO-CLASS SOCIETIES. Midway in the Assalāyana Sutta, the Buddha refers to some foreign regions, that is, “Yona, Kambojā and the countries beyond the borders” (*yona, kambujesu aññesu ca paccantimesu janapadesu*). In these regions, the Buddha declares to Assalāyana that “there are only two classes, that is, master and slave. Having been masters, they are slaves; having been slaves, they are masters” [§6.2]. This is part of the Buddha’s argumentation that the 4-class social system of the brahmins is neither the norm nor a natural one.

Asoka’s 5th and 6th **rock edicts** (c 250 BCE¹⁶) refer to “Yona, Kambojā, Gandharas, Rastrikas, Pitinikas and other peoples on the western borders,” whose societies had only masters and slaves.¹⁷ Three inscriptions—all in Aramaic—found in 1932, 1969 and 1973 respectively in the Lamghan valley above the Pul-i-Darunta,¹⁸ at the Sultan Baba Ridge and at the Sam Baba Ridge; and in 1964 in Kandahar (at Shah-i-Quna, the old city in the south),¹⁹ speak highly of the Kambojas during Asoka’s time.²⁰

The Greek king Milinda (Menander 1 Soter, 165 or 155-130 BCE) apparently came from Yona (Miln 1,11, 82,23, 83,1), a native of Kalasi, gāma in Alasanda, 200 yojanas from the town of Sāgala (modern Sialkot). **The Mahā,vaṃsa** says that Yona was converted to Buddhism after the Third Council (of the Theravāda) (Mahv 12.4-5). The Yona region is today covered by modern Bactria province, and extending into modern-day Pakistani provinces of the NW Frontier Province, Punjab, and parts of Himachal Pradesh and the Jammu region.

3.2 YONA (or Yavana) is the Pali transliteration of Ionia, an ancient Greek region covering the islands between Greece and Asia Minor, and in Attica and the central coastal Anatolia, in present-day Turkey, the region nearest Izmir, historically called Smyrna (after the city). The Ionians flourished as the Ionian League during the 7th-6th centuries BCE.

Yona was a part of the eastern periphery of Persia (ancient Iran), now part of Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Around the Buddha’s time and the after-centuries, “Ionia” was probably a generic term for

¹⁵ See Ganga Ram Garg (ed), *Encyclopaedia of the Hindu World*, New Delhi, 1992: Āśvalāyana.

¹⁶ These rock edicts are found at Shahbarzgarhi and Mansehra in NW Frontier Province. Also found in these places is the 13th rock edict (c 250 BCE) which however omits Gandhara). The Minor Rock Edicts (c 342 BCE), inscribed in Greek and Aramaic, and located in Kandahar (one of the ancient “Alexandrias,” today 2nd largest city in Afghanistan), apparently directly address the Yonas and Kambojas. Three inscriptions found in 1932, 1969 and 1973 respectively in the Lamghan (or Laghman in Pashto language) valley above the Pul-i-Darunta (12 km NW of Jalalabad, to the west of the road to Kabul, above the Pul-i-Darunta), Sultan Baba Ridge and Sam Baba Ridge) and in 1964 in Kandahar—all in Aramaic—speak highly of the Kambojas during Asoka’s time. See B M Barua & I B Topa, *Asoka and His Inscriptions*, 1968:149; Warwick Ball, *Archaeological Gazetteer of Afghanistan*, 1982 n250; & H C Raychaudhury & B N Mukerjee, *Political History of Ancient India*, 1996:256.

¹⁷ See Jules Bloch, *Les inscriptions d’Asoka, Traduites et commentées (Collection Émile Senart)*, Paris, 1950:103, 130; E Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Asoka (Corpus Inscriptorum Indicarum)* 1, Oxford, 1925:191; A C Woolner, *Asoka Text and Glossary*, Calcutta, 1924:8 f.

¹⁸ 12 km NW of Jalalabad, to the west of the road to Kabul, above the Pul-i-Darunta.

¹⁹ See G P Carratelli & G Garbini (tr), *A Bilingual Graeco-Aramaic Edict by Asoka*, IsMEO Serie Orientale Roma 29, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/72363713/A-Bilingual-Graeco-Aramaic-Edict-of-ASoka-Carratelli-and-Carbini>.

²⁰ See B M Barua & I B Topa, *Asoka and His Inscriptions*, 1968:149; Warwick Ball, *Archaeological Gazetteer of Afghanistan*, 1982 n250; & H C Raychaudhury & B N Mukerjee, *Political History of Ancient India*, 1996:256.

the Greeks, which would be Bactria (Persian, Tajik; Chin 大夏 *dàxià*), the ancient name of a historical region from south of the Amu Darya (Oxus) river to the west of the Indus river. The region was the birthplace of Zoroastrianism, and later Buddhism flourished there, before it was overrun by Muslims from the 7th century onwards.²¹

In the later commentarial period and after, Yona or Yavana probably referred not only to the Greeks, but to all westerners living in India or the adjoining regions, and even to foreigners, such as the invading Muslims—just as in Thailand today, white foreigners are referred to generally as “farang,” a local colloquialism for “Frank,” an ancient word for Western Europeans. Hence, *Yavana* (and its various forms) broadly applied to Ionia, Greece, Bactria, and later to even Arabia (SED: *yavana*). [3.4.1]

In ancient Greece (and Arabia, too), there were two kinds of slavery, chattel (personal possession) slavery and dependent groups, such as the penestae of Thessaly or the Spartan helots, who were more like mediaeval serfs (bonded servants in a feudal system). The chattel slave was an individual deprived of liberty and forced to submit to an owner who may buy, sell, or lease him or her like any other chattel.²² In India of the Buddha’s time, too, slaves actually had more privileges than, say, paid workers.²³

3.3 KAMBOJĀ

3.3.1 Kambojā as a country. Kambojā was one of the 16 “great countries” (*mahājanapada*), which was not in the Middle Country in the Buddha’s time,²⁴ but in the “north country” region (*uttarāpatha*). The name is probably related to Cambyses of Anshan (6th cent BCE). The Kambojas were probably the descendents of Indo-Iranians known as Sassanians and Parthians. There were an ancient kshatriya Indo-Iranian tribe inhabiting the borders of the Iranians and the Indo-Aryans. As a kingdom, during the Vedic period, they were located in the Pamirs and Badakshan in Central Asia.

The Kambojas migrated into India during the Indo-Scythian invasion from the 2nd-5th centuries CE. Later they moved into the Indo-Aryan region and in due course, into various parts of northern India up to Asoka’s time. After the 2nd century CE, they probably extended over SW Kashmir and Kafirstan (the Hindu Kush, straddling Afghanistan and Pakistan). [3.1]

Since the Kambojas were kshatriyas or warriors, uninfluenced by the brahmins of northern India, they only had two classes, masters or owners and slaves. A brahminical work, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (2.37), too, says that the Kambojas do not have a 4-class system. In the *Assalâyana Sutta*, the Buddha quotes Kambojā as one of the societies that do not have such a system.

3.3.2 Kambojā as a warring tribe. According to Greek historians, **Alexander the Great** [2.3.2], in his campaigns between Kapiśi²⁵ and Gandhara,²⁶ had to battle hard and without much success with three warlike tribes (*gaṇa*), that is, the Astakenoi, the Aspasioi and the Assakenoi, living in the northwest of the river Indus.²⁷ They appeared as *Aśvayana* and *Aśvakayana* in Pāṇini’s *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (the core of his grammar),²⁸ and as *Aśvaka* in the *Purāṇas*.²⁹ They were kshatriyas, collectively known as the Kambojā tribe [3.3.1].

²¹ Cf MA 3:409; AA 3:110.

²² E M Wood. *Peasant-Citizen and Slave: The Foundations of Athenian Democracy*. New York: Verso, 1988.

²³ On the status of slaves in the Buddha’s time, see **Myth in Buddhism**, SD 16.1 (2.2.2).

²⁴ A 1:213, 4:252, 256, 261.

²⁵ Persian Pashto, today one of the 34 provinces of Afghanistan, some 80 km NE of Kabul. Famous for its wine, which Pāṇini referred to as Kapiśayana (*Sūtra* 4.2.29). In the 7th cent, it was part of a powerful kingdom ruled by a Buddhist kshatriya.

²⁶ An ancient kingdom located today mainly in the Peshawar valley, the Potohar plateau (Taxila) and the Kabul river. Its main cities were Puruṣapura (modern Peshawar), Varmayana (modern Bamiyan) and Takṣaśilā (modern Taxila). The kingdom lasted from the early 1st cent BCE to the 11th cent under the Buddhist Kushan kings. [Taxila](#) was an important centre of Buddhist learning from 5th cent BCE to the 2nd cent.

²⁷ On **Kambojas battling Alexander**: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander%27s_Conflict_with_the_Kambojas. See also T H Holdich, *The Gates of India*, 1910:102 f & J W McCrindle, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, London, 1893.

²⁸ [Sūtra](#) 6.1.110 & [Nadādigana](#) 4.1.99 respectively: *Aṣṭādhyāyī* [Skt text](#).

The Sanskrit prefix *aśva* (Iranian *aspa* and Prakrit *assam*, both meaning “horse”) to their names attest that they were closely related with horses. In fact, they were known to be skilled cattle-herders and horse-breeders,³⁰ shrewd horse-merchants,³¹ fierce mounted warriors,³² and were also said to earn their living as mercenaries.³³ The Asoi (one of their ancient Greek names) is a clan name amongst the modern Kamboj people of Punjab, which apparently connects them with the Asoi/Assakenoi or Aśvakayana (today called Pashtun) of Paropamisadae, that is, the Swat-Kunar valley (previously Kafiristan, modern Nuristan, straddling Pakistan and Afghanistan).

3.4 THE ANCIENT GREEKS AND INDIA³⁴

3.4.1 Yavana, Yona, Yonaka, etc

3.4.1.1 ANCIENT INDIAN WORDS FOR “GREEK.” The earliest Indian word referring to the Greeks is *yavana*, attested in Pāṇini.³⁵ S K Belvalkar has noted that the term goes back to at least the 9th century BCE.³⁶ But it is uncertain whether the ancient Indians derived this word from the Greeks themselves or from some intermediate language. For example, the word is found in the trilingual inscriptions of the third Achaemenid king Darius I (the Great) (522-486 BCE), namely: (1) old Persian, *yauna*; (2) Elamite, *iyauna*; and (3) Akkadian (Babylonian), *ia-a-ma-nu*,³⁷ where *-ma* was pronounced as *-va*, hence *ia-va-nu*.³⁸

Darius conquered the Ionians of Asia Minor in 545 BCE; hence, it is likely that the name *Yavana* (from *ia-a-ma-nu*) must have been known in India, too. Furthermore, the Hebrew word *Yawān* (*Javan*) originally referred to the Ionians, but gradually was applied to the Greeks as an ethnic or political entity.³⁹ In other words, the name “Ionia” was well known in the ancient world.

3.4.1.2 THE IONIANS IN INDIA. A number of scholars—such as Winternitz (1920), Lamotte (1947) and Bechert (1961)—think that the reference to Yona suggests the existence of the Greek-Bactrian kingdom, and as such the Sutta must have been composed shortly before Asoka’s time.⁴⁰ Bronkhorst (2007), too, thinks that the mention of Yona “suggests that the passage which contains this reference was composed after—perhaps long after—the conquest of Alexander the Great” (2007).⁴¹ However, as noted, we have evidence that the ancient Indians knew of the Greeks much earlier than that [3.4.2.2].

Historically, it is difficult to conclusively trace the connection between Sanskrit *yavana* and the Prakrit *yona* (we cannot really say which is the older). Philologically, it is clear that *yona* is the Prakrit trans-

²⁹ Legends of gods and heroes said to have been compiled by the mythical Vyasa (dates unknown), the narrator of the Mahābhārata.

³⁰ L M Joshi & Fauja Singh, *History of Panjab* vol 1, 1976:226; J L Kamboj, *Ancient Kamboj, People and Country*, 1981:247.

³¹ The Aśvaka coins refer to them as *vat’āśvaka*, in Skt *vart’āśvaka*, “those engaged in the horse trade” (E J, Rapson, “Notes on Indian coins and Seals, part 1,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Soc* ns 32, 1900:98-100; R C Majumdar et al, eds, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, 2nd ed 1970-1988 2:45).

³² Or, “skilled horseback warriors” (*aśva,yuddhaḥ,kuśala*) (*Śakti Saṅgama Tantra*, Śat,pañcāśad.deśa,vibhāga, verse 24, in K P Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, 1978:121, 140).

³³ Kauṭilya says that the Kambojās “earned a living by the weapon” (*varta,sāstrōpajīvin*), ie, they were mercenaries as well as weapon-traders (*Artha,śāstra* 1.1.4).

³⁴ See **Assalāyana S** (M 93) @ SD 40a.2 (3.3.2).

³⁵ Pāṇinī, *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, ed Otto Böhtlingk, in *Panini’s Grammar*, Leipzig, 1887: 4.1.49.

³⁶ S K Belvalkar, *Systems of Sanskrit Grammar*, Poona, 1915:17.

³⁷ R G Kent, *Old Persian* [1950] 2nd ed 1953:204 (sv Yauna); H C Toleman, *Ancient Persian Lexicon and Texts*, 1908:119.

³⁸ Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, 1957:165.

³⁹ C C Torrey, *Journal of the American Oriental Soc* 25:302-311.

⁴⁰ M Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature* 2 [1920], Calcutta, 1933:53; E Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, Louvain [1947] 1988:100; H Bechert, *Bruchstücke buddhistischer Verssammlungen aus zentralasiatischen Sanskrithandschriften, Die Anavataptagatha und die Sthaviragatha*, Berlin, 1961:41 n2.

⁴¹ J Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha, Studies in the Culture of Early India*, Leiden, 2007:209. Alexander the Great’s (356-323 BCE) campaigns were from 335-323 BCE, and he tried to invade India in 326 BCE. See **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30) @ SD 36.9 (4.2.1.1).

literation of *yavana*.⁴² It however remains that there were Greek settlements in the eastern parts of the Achaemenid empire long before Alexander.⁴³

A K Narain, in his book, *The Indo-Greeks*, suggests three interesting origins of the word *Yavana*. Firstly, it is derived from √YU, “keeping away, averting,” as in *dveṣo yavana*, “removing hostility” (SED p848), referring to those who are disliked. Secondly, from √YU, “mixing, mingling” (SED id), as in *Yauti miśrayati vā miśrībhavati sarvattra jātibhedābhāvāt iti yavanah*,⁴⁴ referring to a mixed race. And thirdly, from the meaning, “quick, swift,” as in “a swift horse,” referring to their horsemanship (1957:165 f). Interesting as these explanations might be, they are more likely to be only of academic interest, or at best *after* the fact, that is, when the word *Yavana* was well known, it attracted various other local or fanciful etymologies.

3.4.2 Ancient Indians and the Greeks

3.4.2.1 THE BUDDHA’S HISTORICAL DATES. The Buddha’s death is generally accepted by scholars today to be between 411 and 400 BCE,⁴⁵ as stated by **Paul Dundas**, in his book, *The Jains*, that “If, as is now almost universally accepted by informed Indological scholarship, a re-examination of early Buddhist historical material, ..., necessitates a redating of the Buddha’s death to between 411 and 400 BCE....” (2001: 24).

This means that Herodotus—and, as we have seen, Assalâyana, too [2.2]—were the Buddha’s contemporaries. Knowing these dates allows us some confidence to have a good idea of the date of the Assalâyana Sutta, as we shall see. It was possible, even highly likely, that within Assalâyana’s own lifetime that his own tribesmen fiercely fought against Alexander’s soldiers [2.3.2].

3.4.2.2 INDIAN SOLDIERS FOUGHT THE GREEKS. In 480 BCE, king Xerxes I (Khashaya Shah) (519-465 BCE) of Persia invaded mainland Greece. This was to avenge Greek support of a revolt by the Ionians in Asia Minor against the Persians, who were defeated at Marathon (490 BCE). His huge international force included Indian contingents. The Greek historian, Herodotus (c484-425 BCE), describes them as follows: “The Indians wore garments made of tree-wool [cotton], and they had bows of reed and arrows of reed with iron points.” (*Histories* 7.65)⁴⁶

The heavily outnumbered Greeks, under the leadership of the Spartan king, Leonidas (540c-480 BCE) fought a heroic battle against the Persians (numbering between 50,000 to 200,000).⁴⁷ In 480, Leonidas, went to Thermopylae (a narrow coastal pass) with his 300 royal guards, and was joined by 14,000 Greeks from the city-states. By the sixth day of battle, they killed 20,000 enemies, losing 2,500 of their own.

On the seventh day, a Malian Greek traitor, Ephialtes, led the Persian general Hydarnes by a mountain track to the rear of the Greeks.⁴⁸ At that point, Leonidas sent away all Greek troops, while he remained in the pass with his 300 Spartans, 900 helots, 700 Thespians and 400 Thebans. Overwhelmed by the Persian army, all the Greek soldiers were killed, except for Thebans, who surrendered.

The Indian soldiers who fought for the Persian army surely knew of the heroism of the Spartans—whom they knew generically as “Ionians” (*yona*), and brought the story back to India. If we accept the latest historical dates of the Buddha [3.4.2.1], then the battle of Thermopylae (480 BCE) occurred around the time of his birth. Within decades of the Buddha’s death, Alexander the Great would launch his military campaigns across southern Asia (335-323 BCE), reaching the Indian frontiers in 326 BCE. The point

⁴² However, we do have another Indian form, *yauna*, in Mahābhārata (Poon ed, vol 15, *Śāntiparvan* 12.200.40: *Yauna, kamboja, gāndhārāḥ kirātā barbaraiḥ...*, but in the fn, 2 MSS the *vī hūṇa* (the White Huns).

⁴³ Narain 1957:5 f.

⁴⁴ Rajendra Lal Mitra, *Journal of the Asiatic Soc of Bengal* 1874:253.

⁴⁵ See eg Narain 2003. See also Harvey 2007:105-107.

⁴⁶ Herodotus, bk 7, ch 65: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/hh/hh7060.htm> & *The Histories*, ed A D Godley, *Herodotus* vol 3, 1922:378, see also Perseus website, Tufts Univ, USA.

⁴⁷ Herodotus estimates Xerxes’ army at about a million strong; but recent estimates put it as ranging from 50,000-200,000 (Philip DeSouza, *The Greek and Persian Wars 499-386 BCE*, Oxford, 2003:41) or at about 60,000 (Peter R Barksworth, “The organization of Xerxes’s Army,” *Iranica Antiqua* 27 1993:149-167).

⁴⁸ Herodotus, in Henry Cary (ed), *The Histories of Herodotus*, New York, 1904:438.

is that, with such international connections, the Buddha and the Indians of his time, knew about the Greeks, and even met them.⁴⁹

Note that in the Sutta, the Buddha asks Assalāyana, “Have you heard that in Yona [Sparta]... there are **only two classes**, that is, master and slave?” [6.2]. This suggests that the Buddha is alluding to a recent information from abroad that is probably just circulating. All this points to an ancient origin of the Sutta, if not, at least the information in question.⁵⁰

3.4.3 The Greeks in the suttas. The earliest mention of the Greeks—as *yona* [3.2]—in the Buddhist texts is probably in **the Assalāyana Sutta** [§6.2] and its Chinese parallels [1.2.1]. *Yona* is also mentioned in **the Milinda,pañha** (Miln 82, 83), first compiled probably in Sanskrit during the 1st century CE, and then translated into Pali in Sri Lanka in the 4th century,⁵¹ but additions were made to it later.⁵²

Elsewhere in the Pali texts, we find references in **the Mahā Niddesa** to *yona* and *parama,yona* (Nm 155, 415), and in **the Culla Niddesa**, to *yonā* (Nc 37). **The Apadāna** mentions *yonaka* (Ap 2:358). While the two Niddesas are ancient commentaries on the older sections of the Sutta Nipāta, the Apadāna is a collection of stories and legends (past lives) of the early saints. All these works were composed around the 1st-2nd centuries.

With the rise of the Han empire (202 BCE-220 CE), the Silk Road reached its fullest extent of over 6,500 km (4,000 mi), stretching from Rome to Chang’an (the Han capital) and beyond to Korea and Japan. This caravan route, the longest in the world in its time, marked the beginning of globalization. However, as we have seen, the ancient Indians were familiar with the Greeks even earlier on [3.4.2.2]. Greek influence upon India was further reinforced, and more deeply so, by Alexanders’ campaigns. It is very likely that Greek influences were a major factor in the rise of such Buddhist ideas as those of the “great man” (*mahā,purisa*)⁵³ and his 32 marks.⁵⁴

— — —

The Discourse to Assalāyana

M 93

1 Thus have I heard.

THE BRAHMIN YOUTH ASSALĀYANA

The purity of all classes

1.2 At one time, the Blessed One was staying in Anātha,piṇḍika’s monastery-park in Jeta’s grove near Sāvaththī.

2 Now at that time, some 500 brahmins from various provinces were staying in Sāvaththī on some business or other.

3 Then, it occurred to those brahmins:

⁴⁹ On Alexander’s campaigns and later influence, see **Cakka,vatti Siha,nāda S** (D 26), SD 36.10 (2.2.1).

⁵⁰ All this theory is later reflected in Analayo 2012:244-246.

⁵¹ I B Horner, 1963: Miln:H xxi-xxvi.

⁵² W Geiger, *Pali Language and Literature* [Strassburg, 1916], tr B Ghosh 1943:26 §20; S Jayawardhana, *Handbook of Pali Literature*, Colombo, 1994:94 The Chinese version of Miln is shorter, corresponding to only pages 1-89, ie, the first part, of the Pali version: see **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30) @ SD 36.9 (4.2.3). On the etym of *yona* or *yavana*, see Narain 1957:165.

⁵³ On Alexander’s campaigns and later influence, see **Cakka,vatti Siha,nāda S** (D 26), SD 36.10 (2.2.1).

⁵⁴ **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30) @ SD 36.9 (4.2.1.1).

“This recluse Gotama prescribes purity of the 4 classes [declare that the 4 classes are pure].⁵⁵
Now who is there able to refute the recluse Gotama?”

The brahmin youth Assalāyana

3.2 Now at that time, a 16-year-old brahmin youth named Assalāyana, young, shaven-headed, was staying in Sāvattihī.⁵⁶

He was⁵⁷ a master of the 3 Vedas, along with their invocations and rituals, phonology and etymology, and the Iti,hāsa Purāṇas⁵⁸ as the fifth; learned in the vedic padas,⁵⁹ a grammarian,⁶⁰ and well versed in nature lore⁶¹ and the marks of the great man.⁶²

3.3 Then this occurred to those brahmins:

“There is *the 16-year-old brahmin youth named Assalāyana, young, shaven-headed, was staying in Sāvattihī. He is a master of the 3 Vedas, along with their invocations and rituals, phonology and etymology, and the Iti,hāsa Purāṇas as the fifth; learned in the vedic padas, a grammarian, and well versed in nature lore and the marks of the great man.*”

3.4 He will be able to refute the recluse Gotama regarding this statement.”⁶³

Assalāyana is reluctant to challenge the Buddha

4 Then the brahmins approached the brahmin youth Assalāyana, and said this to him:

“Master Assalāyana, this recluse Gotama prescribes purity for the 4 classes.

Come now, master Assalāyana, refute the recluse Gotama regarding this statement!”

4.2 When this was said, the brahmin youth Assalāyana said this to the brahmins:

“Sirs, the recluse Gotama is a Dharma-speaker, and Dharma-speakers are difficult to refute.

I will not be able to refute the recluse Gotama regarding this statement.”

4.3 For the second time, the brahmins said this to the brahmin youth Assalāyana:

⁵⁵ *Ayam kho samaṇo gotamo cātuvaṇṇim suddhim pañṇapeti.* The Buddha’s arguments for the “purity.” incl the equality, of the 4 classes is given in **Kaṇṇa-k,katthala S** (M 90.10-12/2:129 f), SD 10.8. See also **Vāsetṭha S** (M 98 = Sn 3.9/p115-123), SD 37.1.

⁵⁶ *Tena kho pana samayena assalāyano nāma māṇavo sāvattihīyaṃ paṭivasati daharo, vuttasiro, soḷasa,vassudde-siko jātivā.*

⁵⁷ “A master of the 3 Vedas...the marks of the great man”: *ajjhāyako manta,dhara tiṇṇaṃ vedānaṃ pāragū sa,nighaṇḍu,keṭubhānaṃ sakkhara-p,pabhedānaṃ iti,hāsa,pañcamānaṃ padako veyyākaraṇo lokāyata,mahā.purisa.lakkhaṇesu anavayo*; this is from the brahmin pericope, as at **Brahm’āyu S** (M 91.2/2:133) describing the aged Brahm’āyu & **Sela S** (M 92 = Sn 3.7/p105); but without the opening “a mantra-reciter, a mantra-expert” (*ajjhāyako manta,dhara*) as found at **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3.1.3/1:88), **Soṇa,daṇḍa S** (D 4.5(3)/1:114), **Kūṭa,danta S** (D 5.6(7)/-1:130); **Ti,kaṇṇa S** (A 3.58.1/1:163), (**Tevijja**) **Jāṇussoṇi S** (A 3.59.1/1:166), **Doṇa Brāhmaṇa S** (A 5.192.2.4+6/-3:223 f). The Majjhima “brahmin pericope” omits “a mantra-reciter, a mantra-expert” (*ajjhāyako manta,dhara*): **Brahm’āyu S** (M 91.2/2:133); **Sela S** (M 92 = Sn 3.7/p105); **Assalāyana S** (M 93.3/2:147) (qqv). Cf Tha 1171 (“expert in the 3 Vedas,” *tiṇṇaṃ vedāna pāragu*); also Miln 10, Divy 619.20, 620.19. The omission of the 2 opening qualities prob reflects his youth: he is only 16 or that he has just completed his training. However, it is poss that the Majjhima “brahmin pericope” does not mention these 2 qualities. For the full formula & n, see **Doṇa Brāhmaṇa S** (A 5.192.2.3) n @ SD 36.14.

⁵⁸ Iti,hāsa Purāṇas are the oral tradition of brahminical legends of kings and sages.

⁵⁹ *Padako veyyākaraṇo*, ie, well versed in the *pada,pāṭha* of Sanskrit grammar. Technically, this refers to the *pada* (or literal, word for word) method of reciting (or writing) Veda sentences, ie, “a method of arranging each word of a Vedic text separately in its original form [cf *pada*] without regard to the rules of [sandhi]; cf *krama-* and *samhitā-pāṭha*.” (SED). By itself, *pada* can here be translated as “word or word structure.”

⁶⁰ On *veyyākaraṇa*, see BHSD: sv *vyākaraṇa*, = *vaiyākaraṇa* (p517).

⁶¹ *Lokāyata*. This seems to be the early meaning of the term. Its reference of the materialistic philosophy of Cārvāka is apparently later: see Rhys Davids, D:RD 1:166-172. See **Lokāyatikā Brāhmaṇa S** (A 9.38/4:428-432), SD 35.2. See also Jayatilleke 1963:48-58 (§§55-67).

⁶² For details on the 32 marks, see **Buddhānussati**, SD 15.7(4.1) n & **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30/3:142-179), SD 36.9.

⁶³ *So kho pahoti samaṇena gotamena saddhim asmiṃ vacane paṭimantetun’ti.*

“Master Assalāyana, this recluse Gotama prescribes purity for the 4 classes.
Come now, master Assalāyana, refute the recluse Gotama [148] regarding this statement!”

4.4 For the second time, the brahmin youth Assalāyana said this to the brahmins:

“Sirs, the recluse Gotama is a Dharma-speaker, and Dharma-speakers are difficult to refute.
I will not be able to refute the recluse Gotama regarding this statement.”

4.5 For the third time, the brahmins said this to the brahmin youth Assalāyana:

“Master Assalāyana, this recluse Gotama prescribes purity for the 4 classes.
Come now, master Assalāyana, refute the recluse Gotama regarding this statement!”

4.6 For, indeed, master Assalāyana has lived [trained in] the wanderer’s life.⁶⁴

Let not master Assalāyana be defeated without a fight!⁶⁵

4.7 When this was said, the brahmin youth Assalāyana said this to the brahmins:

“Surely, sirs, I’m not getting through to you,⁶⁶ when I say that the recluse Gotama is a Dharma-speaker, and Dharma-speakers are difficult to refute. I will not be able to refute the recluse Gotama regarding this statement.”

Even then, sirs, I will go at your bidding.”⁶⁷

Assalāyana approaches the Buddha

5 Then the brahmin youth Assalāyana, along with a large group of brahmins approached the Blessed One, and they greeted the Blessed One. When the cordial and courteous exchange was done, he sat down at one side.

5.2 Seated thus at one side, the brahmin youth Assalāyana said this to the Blessed One:

“Master Gotama, the brahmins say thus:

‘The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā’s [God’s] own sons, the offspring from his mouth,⁶⁸ born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā.’⁶⁹

What does the master Gotama say here?”

5.3 “Now, Assalāyana, we can see the brahminees, the wives of the brahmins,⁷⁰ who have seasons and bear children and give suck.⁷¹ And yet these yoni-born⁷² [womb-born] brahmins say thus:

⁶⁴ *Caritaṃ kho pana bhotā assalāyanena paribbājakam*. Comy takes this to mean “a kind of going-forth” (*pabbajjā, vidha*) in terms of his training as a brahmin (MA 3:408). See foll n.

⁶⁵ *Mā bhavaṃ assalāyano ayuddha, parājitaṃ parājayi*, lit “Let not master Assalāyana not be defeated without being defeated in battle/war.” Comy explains that such wanderers (here, itinerant brahmin virtuosi like Assalāyana) have mastered the mantras (Vedic texts) and lived the brahminical tradition. As such, they are certain that Assalāyana would not be defeated, but will be victorious (MA 3:408). See prec n.

⁶⁶ *Addhā kho ahaṃ bhavanto na labhāmi*. This cautious response lit tr something like “I cannot get the way to you,” or fig, “You don’t seem to get it!” On a number of other occasions, the Buddha similarly hesitates to answer such questions: see **Tāla, puṭa S** (S 42.2.5/4:305 f) & SD 20.8 n; **Yodh’ājiva S** (S 42.3/4:308 f), SD 23.3; **Ass’āroha S** (S 42.5/4:310); by a brahmin youth: **Assalāyana S** (M 93.4.7/2:148), SD 23.11.

⁶⁷ *Api cāhaṃ bhavantānaṃ vacanena gamissāmi*.

⁶⁸ See *Ṛg, veda* 10.90 (Puruṣa Śūkta); DAṬ 3:46; also Gombrich 1992a:163 f, cf 167. The phrase *orasā mukhato jatā*, lit “the breast-born ‘sons’ born from the mouth,” is ironic as it suggests two different and incompatible places of origins. See foll n.

⁶⁹ This section (§5.2), as in **Aggañña S** (D 27), but where the Buddha adds, “These brahmins misrepresent Brahmā, tell lies, and earn much demerit” (D 27.4/3:82 f), SD 2.19. “These brahmins misrepresent Brahmā” because Brahmā has neither physical nor human characteristics. Secondly, as Comy points out, if what they say is true, then Brahmā’s mouth must be a brahminee’s yoni! (MA 862). They “tell lies” because all this is untrue in the first place; as such they “earn much demerit,” that is, by misrepresenting Brahmā and lying about him. In theistic theology, this is tantamount to blasphemy. We have here an example of **black humour**. **Norman** notes here, as in **Aggañña S** (id), that “the Buddha satirises the Puruṣasūkta of the *Ṛgveda*” (1991:194).

⁷⁰ Comy: Brahminees are seen being brought to families, and wedded for the sake of obtaining sons. The brahminees, too, experience menstrual seasons (like every normal woman) (MA 3:408).

5.4 ‘The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā’s [God’s] own sons, the offspring from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā.’”
[149]

(A) ARGUMENTS FROM BIRTH

(1) TWO-CLASS SOCIETIES

Yona, Kambojā and beyond

6 “Although master Gotama speaks thus, the brahmins here still think that⁷³

‘The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā’s [God’s] own sons, the offspring from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā.’”

6.2 “What do you think, Assalāyana? Have you heard that in Yona,⁷⁴ Kambojā⁷⁵ and the countries beyond the borders,⁷⁶ there are **only two classes**, that is, master⁷⁷ and slave? Having been masters, they are slaves; having been slaves, they are masters.”⁷⁸

6.3 “Yes, sir, I have heard that

that in Yona and Kambojā and the countries beyond the borders, there are only two classes, that is, master and slave. Having been masters, they are slave; having been slaves, they are masters.”

6.4 “Here, then, Assalāyana, on what strength, on what basis, did the brahmins say that

‘The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā’s [God’s] own sons, the offspring from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā?’”

(2) THE BAD KARMIC COURSE CYCLE

Does bad karma affects only non-brahmins?

7 “Although master Gotama speaks thus, the brahmins here still think that

‘The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā’s [God’s] own sons, the offspring from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā.’”

7.2 “What do you think, Assalāyana? Is it that only a kshatriya [warrior class member] who

⁷¹ See §5.2 n.

⁷² *Yoni* is usu tr as “womb,” but also refers the a woman’s sexual organ. Comy points out, if what they say is true, then Brahmā’s mouth must be a brahminee’s yoni! (MA 862). Here, its *literal* sense is clearly played upon to highlight the fact that the brahmins, despite claiming “high birth,” are really *biologically* (ie sexually) just like every other human! In other words, despite their claims of being born from “God’s mouth,” the brahmins are all born from women in the same way as anyone other human. See 3 prec nn.

⁷³ Assalāyana repeats this stock passage a total of 7 times [§§6.1, 7.1, 8.1, 9.1, 10.1, 11.1, 12.1]. Note that he does not seem to speak for *himself*, but acts merely as a spokesman for the brahmins. Cf §17.3 below.

⁷⁴ Yona here prob refers to westerners in the regions northwest of India: see Intro (3.2).

⁷⁵ Kambojā, one of the 16 “great countries” (*mahā.janapada*), not in the Middle Country, but in the “north country” region (*uttarā.patha*): see Intro (3.3).

⁷⁶ “Yona, Kambojā and the countries beyond the borders,” *yona,kambujesu aññesu ca paccantimesu janapadesu*. See Intro (3).

⁷⁷ “Master,” *ayya*, usually means “noble, worthy,” and in later texts, used as a vocative: see SD 46.14 (3.3).

⁷⁸ Comy says that if a brahmin and his wife go trading in these border countries, and he dies there leaving no son; then his wife has sex with a slave or workman, their child would be a slave, but “pure” on his mother’s side. If this child, a brahmin boy, trades in the Middle Country and marries a brahmin girl, their issue will be “pure” only on his mother’s side. (MA 3:409)

destroys life,
 takes the not-given,
 commits sexual misconduct,
 speaks falsehood,
 speaks maliciously,
 speaks harsh words,
 speaks frivolously,
 is covetous,
 has a heart of ill will,
 holds wrong views,

who, with the body's breaking up, after death,⁷⁹ would be reborn in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell—but not a brahmin?⁸⁰

7.3 Is it that *only* a vaishya [business class member] who

destroys life,
takes the not-given,
commits sexual misconduct,
speaks falsehood,
speaks maliciously,
speaks harsh words,
speaks frivolously,
is covetous,
has a heart of ill will,
holds wrong views,

with the body's breaking up, after death, would be reborn in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell—but not a brahmin?

7.4 Is it that *only* a shudra [working class member] who

destroys life,
takes the not-given,
commits sexual misconduct,
speaks falsehood,
speaks maliciously,
speaks harsh words,
speaks frivolously,
is covetous,
has a heart of ill will,
holds wrong views,

with the body's breaking up, after death, would be reborn in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell—but not a brahmin?"

Bad karma affects all alike

7.5 “No, indeed, master Gotama.

⁷⁹ “With the body's breaking up, after death,” *kāya, bhedassa param, marañā*. Buddhaghosa explains this phrase as foll: “With the body's breaking up” (*kāyassa bheda*) means on abandoning the aggregates that are clung to; “after death” (*param, marañā*) means that in-between state (*tad-antaram*), in the grasping of the aggregates that have been generated (*abhinibbatta-k, khandha, gahaṇe*). Or, “with the body's breaking up” means the interruption of the life-faculty, and “after death” means after the death-consciousness (*cuti, cittato uddham*). (Vism 13.91/427; cf NcA 69). See **Devā, dūta S** (M 130.2/3:178 = SD 2.23).

⁸⁰ The argument here [§§7-8], centred around *the karmic courses* (*kamma, patha*) is often used by the Buddha, eg, **Aggañña S** (D 27.5-6/3:82 f), SD 2.19; **Madhura S** (M 84.6-8/2:86-89), SD 69.8; **Assalāyana S** (M 93.7-8/2:149 f), SD 40a.2 (here); **Esukāri S** (M 96.8+13-17/2:179, 181-184), SD 37.9.

7.6 For, master Gotama, a kshatriya [warrior class member], too, who
 destroys life,
 takes the not-given,
 commits sexual misconduct,
 speaks falsehood,
 speaks maliciously,
 speaks harsh words,
 speaks frivolously,
 is covetous,
 has a heart of ill will,
 holds wrong views,

with the body's breaking up, after death, would himself be reborn in a plane of misery, a bad destination,
 a lower realm, in hell.

7.7 For, master Gotama, a brahmin, too, who
destroys life,
takes the not-given,
commits sexual misconduct,
speaks falsehood,
speaks maliciously,
speaks harsh words,
speaks frivolously,
is covetous,
has a heart of ill will,
holds wrong views,

with the body's breaking up, after death, would himself be reborn in a plane of misery, a bad destination,
a lower realm, in hell.

7.8 For, master Gotama, a vaishya, too, who
destroys life,
takes the not-given,
commits sexual misconduct,
speaks falsehood,
speaks maliciously,
speaks harsh words,
speaks frivolously,
is covetous,
has a heart of ill will,
holds wrong views,

with the body's breaking up, after death, would himself be reborn in a plane of misery, a bad destination,
a lower realm, in hell.

7.9 For, master Gotama, a shudra, too, who
destroys life,
takes the not-given,
commits sexual misconduct,
speaks falsehood,
speaks maliciously,
speaks harsh words,
speaks frivolously,
is covetous,
has a heart of ill will,
holds wrong views,

with the body's breaking up, after death, would himself be reborn in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.

- 7.10 For, master Gotama, all those from the 4 classes, too, who
 destroy life,
 take the not-given, [150]
 commit sexual misconduct,
 speak falsehood,
 speak maliciously,
 speak harsh words,
 speak frivolously,
 are covetous,
 have a heart of ill will,
 hold wrong views,

with the body's breaking up, after death, would themselves be reborn in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell."

7.11 "Here, then, Assalāyana, on what strength, on what basis, did the brahmins say that

7.12 *'The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā's [God's] own sons, the offspring from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā'?"*

(3) THE GOOD KARMIC COURSE CYCLE

Is it only brahmins who do good karma?

8 "Although master Gotama speaks thus, the brahmins here still think that

'The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā's [God's] own sons, the offspring from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā.'"

- 8.2 "What do you think, Assalāyana? Is it that only a brahmin who
 refrains from destroying life,
 refrains from taking the not-given,
 refrains from committing sexual misconduct,
 refrains from speaking falsehood,
 refrains from speaking maliciously,
 refrains from speaking harsh words,
 refrains from speaking frivolously,
 is not covetous,
 has a heart of lovingkindness,
 holds right views,

who, with the body's breaking up, after death, would be reborn in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in a heaven world—but not a kshatriya, nor a vaishya, nor a shudra?

Good karma affects all alike

8.3 "Certainly not, master Gotama.

- 8.4 For, a kshatriya, too, is one who
*refrains from destroying life,
 refrains from taking the not-given,
 refrains from committing sexual misconduct,
 refrains from speaking falsehood,
 refrains from speaking maliciously,
 refrains from speaking harsh words,*

*refrains from speaking frivolously,
is not covetous,
has a heart of lovingkindness,
holds right views,*

so that, with the body's breaking up, after death, he, too, would be reborn in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in a heaven world.

8.5 For, a brahmin, too, is one who
*refrains from destroying life,
refrains from taking the not-given,
refrains from committing sexual misconduct,
refrains from speaking falsehood,
refrains from speaking maliciously,
refrains from speaking harsh words,
refrains from speaking frivolously,
is not covetous,
has a heart of lovingkindness,
holds right views,*

so that, with the body's breaking up, after death, he, too, would be reborn in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in a heaven world.

8.6 For, a vaishya, too, is one who
*refrains from destroying life,
refrains from taking the not-given,
refrains from committing sexual misconduct,
refrains from speaking falsehood,
refrains from speaking maliciously,
refrains from speaking harsh words,
refrains from speaking frivolously,
is not covetous,
has a heart of lovingkindness,
holds right views,*

so that, with the body's breaking up, after death, he, too, would be reborn in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in a heaven world.

8.7 For, a shudra, too, is one who
*refrains from destroying life,
refrains from taking the not-given,
refrains from committing sexual misconduct,
refrains from speaking falsehood,
refrains from speaking maliciously,
refrains from speaking harsh words,
refrains from speaking frivolously,
is not covetous,
has a heart of lovingkindness,
holds right views,*

so that, with the body's breaking up, after death, he, too, would be reborn in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in a heaven world.

8.8 For, all those from the 4 classes, too, who
*refrain from destroying life,
refrain from taking the not-given,
refrain from committing sexual misconduct,
refrain from speaking falsehood,
refrain from speaking maliciously,*

refrain from speaking harsh words,
 refrain from speaking frivolously,
 are not covetous,
 have a heart of lovingkindness,
 hold right views,

so that, with the body's breaking up, after death, they, too, would be reborn in a state of joy, in a happy destination, in a heaven world.”

8.9 “Here, then, Assalāyana, on what strength, on what basis, did the brahmins say that
‘The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā’s [God’s] own sons, the offspring from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā’?”

(4) THE LOVINGKINDNESS CYCLE

Anyone can cultivate lovingkindness

9 “Although master Gotama speaks thus, the brahmins here still [151] think that
‘The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā’s [God’s] own sons, the offspring from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā.’”

9.2 “What do you think, Assalāyana? Is it only a brahmin who is able to cultivate a heart of lovingkindness in this region,⁸¹ free from hate, free from ill will—but not a kshatriya, nor a vaishya, nor a shudra?”⁸²

9.3 “Certainly not, master Gotama.

9.4 A kshatriya, too, master Gotama, is able to cultivate a heart of lovingkindness in this region, free from hate, free from ill will.

9.5 A brahmin, too, master Gotama, is able to cultivate a heart of lovingkindness in this region, free from hate, free from ill will.

9.6 A vaishya, too, master Gotama, is able to cultivate a heart of lovingkindness in this region, free from hate, free from ill will.

9.7 A shudra, too, master Gotama, is able to cultivate a heart of lovingkindness in this region, free from hate, free from ill will.

9.8 Everyone from the 4 classes, too, master Gotama, are able to cultivate a heart of lovingkindness in this region, free from hate, free from ill will.

9.9 “Here, then, Assalāyana, on what strength, on what basis, did the brahmins say that
‘The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā’s [God’s] own sons, the offspring from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā’?”

(5) THE SELF-PURIFICATION CYCLE

10 “Although master Gotama speaks thus, the brahmins here still think that
‘The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā’s [God’s] own sons, the offspring from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā.’”

⁸¹ “In this region,” *asmim padese*. This is a simple loc form, as reflected here and in **Esukāri S** (M 96.14.1/2:182), SD 37.9. Horner thinks *padesa* has a non-Pali sense (M:H 3:343 n1), which is unwarranted.

⁸² *Tam kim maññasi assalāyana brāhmaṇo ’va nu kho pahoti asmim padese averam avyābajham metta cittam bhāvetum, no khattiyo, no vesso, no suddōti*. As at **Esukāri S** (M 96.14.1/2:182), SD 37.9.

10.2 “What do you think, Assalāyana? Is it only a brahmin who, taking a bath-sponge [loofah] and bath-powder, going to the river,⁸³

who is able to wash off dust and dirt—and not a kshatriya, nor a vaishya, nor a shudra?”⁸⁴

10.3 “Certainly not, master Gotama.

10.4 For, a kshatriya, too, *master Gotama, taking a bath-sponge [loofah] and bath-powder, going to the river, is able to wash off dust and dirt.*

10.5 For, a brahmin, too, *master Gotama, taking a bath-sponge [loofah] and bath-powder, going to the river, is able to wash off dust and dirt.*

10.6 For, a vaishya, too, *master Gotama, taking a bath-sponge [loofah] and bath-powder, going to the river, is able to wash off dust and dirt.*

10.7 For, a shudra, too, *master Gotama, taking a bath-sponge [loofah] and bath-powder, going to the river, is able to wash off dust and dirt.*

10.8 For, all those from the 4 classes, too, *master Gotama, taking a bath-sponge [loofah] and bath-powder, going to the river, are able to wash off dust and dirt.”*

10.9 “Here, then, Assalāyana, on what strength, on what basis, did the brahmins say that

‘The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā’s [God’s] own sons, the offspring from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā?’”

THE RAJAH’S ASSEMBLY (FIRE-LIGHTING) CYCLE

All fires are alike

11 “Although master Gotama speaks thus, the brahmins here still think that

‘The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā’s [God’s] own sons, the offspring from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā.’”

11.2 “What do you think, Assalāyana? Here,⁸⁵ a head-anointed kshatriya rajah [152] were to have assembled a hundred men from various births [jati], saying:

11.3 ‘Come, sirs, those here who are born into a kshatriya family, a brahmin family, a royal family, take [bring along] an upper fire-stick⁸⁶ of teak,⁸⁷ or sal, or saral, or sandalwood, or padmaka, and produce some heat.⁸⁸

⁸³ “Taking a bath-sponge...to the river,” *sotti, sinānim ādāya nadim gantvā rajo, jallam pavāhetum*, recurs, mutatis mutandis, at **Ghaṭikāra S** (M 81.6+7/2:46), SD 49.3. Cf **Buddha, vaṃsa**: “Just as water pervades people, bad and good alike with its coolness, takes away dust and dirt, || even so, you, too, by cultivating lovingkindness for friend and foe alike, having attained perfection of lovingkindness, will gain self-awakening.” (*Yathā pi udakam nāma kal-yāne pāpake jane | samam pharati sītena pavāheti rajo, malam || tath’eva tvam ahita, hite samam mettāya bhāvaya | metta, pāramitam gantvā sambodhim pāpuṇissasi*, B 2.156/19). Cf “washed away dust and dirt” (*rajo, jallam pavāhayi*, J 6:588 etc); “(have) washed all evil away” (*sabba, pāpam pavāhetim*, Tha 349). Note that *rajo`vajalla* and *rajō-jalla* (Dh 141, where Uv 33.1 has *rajo, mala*) are metrical forms of *rajo, jalla*, and more exactly, *jalla* is “wet dirt,” such as a muddy smudge: see Dh:N 96 n141. Comy notes how monks should wash in the river (MA 3:280), qu Cv 5.1.3 @ V 2:106. See also foll n.

⁸⁴ Whole section: *Tam kim maññasi assalāyana brāhmaṇo`va nu kho pahoti sotti, sinānim ādāya nadim gantvā rajo, jallam pavāhetum no khattiyo no vesso no suddōti*, also at **Esukāri S** (M 96.15.1/2:182 f), SD 37.9.

⁸⁵ This whole section (parables of the rajah’s assembly) as at **Esukāri S** (M 96.16/2:183), SD 37.9.

⁸⁶ Cf the fire-stick parable at **Mahā Saccaka S** (M36) where a dry upper-stick rub against a wet lower-stick is unable to produce fire, which alludes to a meditator whose mind is still attracted to sensual objects (M 36.17/1:240).

⁸⁷ These are well known Indian trees, here given with the botanical names: **teak**, *Tectona grandis* (*sāka*, D 1:92; M 2:129, 183; DA 1:259; Vism 250); **sal**, *Shorea robusta* (*sāla*, M 1:183, 488; D 2:134; A 1:202, 3:49, 214; Dh 162), the kind of tree under which the Buddha was born and died; **saral**, the pine tree, *Pinus longifolia* (*salaḷa*, M 2:183; J 5:420; B 2.51 *sarala* = J 1:13; Vv 35.5; VvA 162; Miln 338), a sweet-scented tree; **sandalwood**, *Santalum album* (*candana*); and **padmaka**, Himalayan wild cherry, *Primus cerasoides* (*padumaka*, M 2:183).

11.4 And, come, too, sirs, those here born into a chandala [outcaste] family, or a trapper family, or a wicker-worker family, or a cartwright family, or a scavenger’s family, take an upper fire-stick made from a dog’s trough, or a pig’s trough, or a refuse bin, or castor-oil wood, and start a fire, produce some heat!⁸⁹

11.5 What do you think, Assalāyana? When the fire is started, heat produced, by one born into a kshatriya family, a brahmin family, a royal family, *who has used [brought along] an upper fire-stick of teak or sal or saral or sandalwood or padmaka—*

11.6 his fire would surely have a flame, a colour, and a radiance,⁹⁰ and should be useful like any fire.⁹¹

11.7 But, as for the fire that is started, heat produced, by one born into a chandala [outcaste] family, or a trapper family, or a wicker-worker family, or a cartwright family, or a scavenger’s family,⁹² *who has used [brought along] an upper fire-stick made from a dog’s trough, or a pig’s trough, or a refuse bin, or castor-oil wood—*

11.8 would it be that his fire would have no flame, no colour, no radiance, and cannot be used as a fire should be used?”

11.9 “Not at all, master Gotama!

11.10 *As for the fire started, heat produced, by one born into a kshatriya family, a brahmin family, a royal family, who has used [brought along] an upper fire-stick of teak have a flame, a colour, and a radiance, and be used in a way that a fire should be used or sal or salaḷa or sandalwood or padmaka—*

11.11 his fire would surely have a flame, a colour, and a radiance, and should be useful like any fire.

11.12 So, too, it is *for the fire that is started, heat produced, by one born into a chandala family, or a trapper family, or a wicker-worker family, or a cartwright family, or a scavenger’s family, who has used [brought along] an upper fire-stick made from a dog’s trough, or a pig’s trough, or a refuse bin, or castor-oil wood—*

11.13 his fire, too, [153] would surely have a flame, a colour, and a radiance, and should be useful like any fire.

⁸⁸ *Āyantu bhonto ye tattha khattiya, kulā brāhmaṇa, kulā rājañña, kulā uppannā sākassa vā sālassa vā salaḷassa vā candanassa vā padumakassa vā uttarāraṇiṃ ādāya aggim abhinibbattentu, tejo pātukarontu.* §§11.2-12 occurs mutatis mutandis at **Esukārī S** (M 96.16/2:183 f), SD 37.9.

⁸⁹ *Āyantu pana bhonto ye tattha caṇḍāla, kulā nesāda, kulā vena, kulā ratha, kāra, kulā pukkusa, kulā uppannā, sā-pāna, doṇiyā vā sūkara, doṇiyā vā rajaka, doṇiyā vā eraṇḍa, kaṭṭhassa vā uttarāraṇiṃ ādāya, aggim abhinibbattentu, tejo pātukarontūti.*

⁹⁰ *Pabhassara*; cf **Kanna, katthala S** (M 90), where, in a similar context, *ābha* is used instead (M 90.12.2/2:130), SD 10.8.

⁹¹ *So eva nu khvāssa aggi accimā c’eva vaṇṇavā ca pabhassaro ca tena ca sakkā agginā aggi, karaṇīyam kātum.*

⁹² “A chandala...or a scavenger’s family,” *caṇḍāla, kulā nesāda, kulā vena, kulā ratha, kāra, kulā pukkusa, kulā.* These 5 low births passage recurs at M 2:152, 183, 3:169; S 1:93; A 1:107 = 2:85 = Pug 51. A **chandala** or outcaste (*caṇḍāla*) is a member of one of the native dark-skinned tribes or outcaste communities (V 4:7; M 2:152; S 5:168 f; A 3:214, 226 *caṇḍālī*, 228, 4:376; Sn 137; Thī 509; J 3:233, 4:391, 6:213; Ap 377; Miln 5). A **trapper** (*nesada*) is def by Comys as “a hunter or trapper” (VA 738 = SA 1:162 = AA 2:175 = PugA 227). Interestingly, the Sinhala refer to the Veddas (or Veddahs), an indigenous tribe, as *nesāda*. T W Rhys Davids (1894) calls them “wildmen of the woods” (Miln:RD 2:211). A **wicker-worker** or basket-weaver (*vena*): this *jāti* (“birth”) incl the carpenters (or wood cutters) and bamboo-workers (*veṇa, jātīti tacchaka, jāti veṇu, kāra, jāti*, VA 738), or basket-workers (*vilīva, kāra*, SA 1:162 = AA 2:175). Jātaka explains *veṇī* as “female wood-cutters” (*tacchikā*, J 5:306, 16’ ad 306.14*, “wood-cutter, you are a chandali (female outcaste),” *veṇī tvam asi caṇḍālī*). A **cartwright** or chariot-builder (*ratha, kāra*), but Comys usu expl as “leather-workers” (*camma, kāra*, VA 739 = SA 1:162 = AA 2:175 = PugA 227 = J 4:174); see Miln 331 where both are mentioned in a list; also D:RD 1:100, 102 & V:H 2:173 n7. A **scavenger** (*pukkusa*) is def as “flower-scavenger” (*puppha-c, chaḍḍaka*, VA 738 = SA 1:162 = AA 2:175), eg Sunīta (Tha 620); Pukkusa (D:RD 2:141; DPPN sv); also *caṇḍāla, pukkusa* (A 1:162, 3:214). For the insertion of *veṇa, kāra nesāda ratha, kāra* between *caṇḍāla* and *pukkusa*, see D:RD 1:100. None of these are incl under “worker class” or shudra (*sudda*), which is part of the class (*vaṇṇa*) system. See **Aggañña S** (D 27/3:80-97), SD 2.19; see also Uma Chakravarti, *The Social Dimensions of Early Buddhism*, Delhi, 1987:94-121. On aryas and mlecchas, see SD 30.10 (1).

11.14 For, indeed, master Gotama, all fires have a flame, a colour, and a radiance, and *should* be useful as any fire would.”⁹³

11.15 “Here, then, Assalâyana, on what strength, on what basis, did the brahmins say that ‘*The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā’s [God’s] own sons, the offspring from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā*’?”

(6) THE INTERMARRIAGE CYCLE

Offspring of kshatriya youth and brahmin maiden

12 “Although master Gotama speaks thus, the brahmins here still think that ‘*The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā’s [God’s] own sons, the offspring from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā*.’”

12.2 “What do you think, Assalâyana? Here, a kshatriya youth were to consort with a brahmin maiden, and as a result of their consorting, a son were born.”⁹⁴

12.3 Should the son born of the brahmin maiden by the kshatriya youth be like the mother or like the father? Should he be called a kshatriya or a brahmin?”

12.4 “The son, master Gotama, born of the brahmin maiden by the kshatriya youth should be both like the mother and like the father, too. He should be called kshatriya and brahmin, too.”

Offspring of kshatriya maiden and brahmin youth

13 “What do you think, Assalâyana? Here, a brahmin youth were to consort with a kshatriya maiden, and as a result of their consorting, a son were born.

13.2 Should the son born of the kshatriya maiden by the brahmin youth be like the mother or like the father? Should he be called a kshatriya or a brahmin?”

13.3 “The son, master Gotama, born of the kshatriya maiden by the brahmin youth should be both like the mother and like the father, too. He should be called kshatriya and brahmin, too.”

14 PARABLE OF THE MARE AND THE ASS. “What do you think, Assalâyana? Here, a mare were to mate with an ass, and as a result of the mating, a foal⁹⁵ were born.”⁹⁶

Should the foal born of the mare by the ass be like the mother or like the father? Should he be called a horse or an ass?”

14.2 On account of the cross-breeding, he should be called a mule.⁹⁷

14.3 For, here, [154] master Gotama, I see the reason for difference, but I see no reason for any difference in the other (two) cases.”⁹⁸

⁹³ *Sabbo’pi hi, bho gotama, aggi accimā ceva vaṇṇavā ca pabhassaro ca sabbena’pi sakkā agginā aggi, karaṇīyam kātun’ti.*

⁹⁴ This is, in fact, the case with the brahmin youth **Ambaṭṭha**, as recorded in **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3). It is said that the arrogant brahmin youth, Ambaṭṭha, was descended from a marriage btw a kshatriya man and a slave-girl (prob a shudra) (D 3.1.16.3/1:93), but according to Māṇava Dharma Śāstra (10.8+47), he had a brahmin father and a vaishya mother: see SD 21.3 (1.3). On the kshatriyas being more strict about descent than the brahmins, see **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3) @ SD 21.3 (2.2.3).

⁹⁵ “Foal,” *kisora* (Skt *kiśora*, “a colt”), vll *kissera*, *kissara*.

⁹⁶ *Idha vaḷavaṃ gadrabhena sampayojeyyuṃ, tesam sampayogam anvāya kisoro jāyetha.*

⁹⁷ Ce Ee (also Pischel 1880) *vekurāñjaya* hi so bho gotama, assataro hoti.* (*) Be *kuṇḍaṃ hi*; WT *kuṇḍaṃ hi*; Se *kumāraṇḍu pi*. Neumann (1900) suggests reading *vekurānvāya* = Skt *vaikriyānvayāya*, “change due to mutation” (2:881).

⁹⁸ *Idam hi’ssa bho gotama nānā, karaṇam passāmi, amutra ca pana’sānam* [so Ee; Be Ce *pan’esānam*; Se *pana sānam*] *na kiñci nānā, karaṇam passāmīti*. This is a difficult sentence: the tr is conjectural.

(B) ARGUMENTS FROM MANTRAS

(1) THE PARABLE OF THE TWO BRAHMIN BROTHERS

The initiated reciter and the uninitiated non-reciter

15 “What do you think, Assalāyana? Suppose there were two brahmin youths who are uterine brothers, one is an initiated reciter (of the Vedas), the other neither initiated nor a reciter.”⁹⁹

15.2 Here¹⁰⁰ which would the brahmins first feed the ancestral offering (*saddha*),¹⁰¹ or the fire oblation (*sthālī, pāka*),¹⁰² or the sacrifice (*yañña*),¹⁰³ or the guest meal (*pāhuna*)?¹⁰⁴

15.3 “Here, master Gotama, it is the brahmin youth who is an initiated reciter who would be the first to be fed the ancestral offering, or the fire oblation, or the sacrifice, or the guest meal.

15.4 For, master Gotama, what great fruit would there be here in a gift to the uninitiated non-reciter?”

The immoral reciter and the virtuous non-reciter

16 “What do you think, Assalāyana? Suppose here there were two brahmin youths who are uterine brothers, one is an initiated reciter (of the Vedas) but immoral, bad by nature; the other neither initiated nor a reciter, but morally virtuous, good by nature.

16.2 Here which would the brahmins first feed the ancestral offering, or the fire oblation, or the sacrifice, or the guest meal?”

16.3 “Here, master Gotama, it is the brahmin youth who is uninitiated and a non-reciter, morally virtuous, good by nature, who would be the first to be fed the ancestral offering, or the fire oblation, or the sacrifice, or the guest meal.

16.4 For, master Gotama, what great fruit would there be here in a gift to the initiated reciter who is immoral, bad by nature?”

⁹⁹ *Tam kim maññasi assalāyana idhāssu dve māṇavakā bhātaro sodariyā, eko ajjhāyako upanīto eko anajjhāyako anupanīto.*

¹⁰⁰ A similar ref to these 4 offerings occurs in **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3.1.24-27/1:97 f), SD 21.3.

¹⁰¹ Skt *śrāddha* (D 1:97; A 1:166, 5:269-273; J 2:360; DA 1:267); making such an offering: V 1:7; D 2:39; Sn 1146. Traditionally, this is an annual ancestral ritual for the “fathers” (*pitṛ*; P *peta*) or ancestors, done in the 6th month, ie, Bhādra, pada (Aug-Sep). See **(Saddha) Jāṇussoṇi S** (A 10.177/5:269-273) @ SD 2.6a (2). See Gonda 1980:441-456.

¹⁰² Skt *sthālī, pāka* (lit “cooked in an earthen vessel,” a Vedic ritual consisting of an offering of barley or rice cooked in milk used as an oblation: see Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka 6.4.19 (V 3:15; D 1:97 = DA 1:267; S 2:242, 5:384; A 1:166; J 1:186; Miln 249). Comy say this was “food offered during blessing rituals, etc” (*maṅgal’ādi, bhatte*, DA 1:267). The *sthālī, pāka* is performed on every Prathama (the first day of lunar month). *Sthālī* is the pot in which rice is cooked, and which must be placed in the *aupasana* (the family’s sacred fire). The cooked rice, called *charu*, must be offered to the same fire. See Gonda 1980:423-427.

¹⁰³ Skt *yajña*: D 1:129 f, 137 f; DA 1:204-107. See **Pasenadi Yañña S** (S 3.9/1:75 f), SD 22.11. On *mahā yañña*, see M 2:204; DhA 145 (cf DhA:PR 193). A *yajna* (meaning “sacrifice”) is a Vedic ritual, which may be simply an offering of clarified butter into a fire, or it may involve 17 priests in an elaborate 12-day ritual incl the building of a large fire altar as in the *agni, cayana* (“piled fire,” ie, a fire altar on a raised level, such as bricks). The *yajna* always includes a fire, Sanskrit mantras (Vedic verses), and some sort of offering. In the larger public rituals, it was common to have animal sacrifice/s. See PED: *yañña*.

¹⁰⁴ *Pāhuna*, D 1:97 = M 2:154; Vism 230; DA 1:267. Skt *prāhavana*, “meal for a guest”; from Skt *prāhuna* or *prāghūna*, “guest”; cf *prāhavanīya* (P *pāhuneyya*), “worthy of being received as a guest.” Cf *āhuna, pāhuna* (“sacrifice and offering”), VvA 155. See SD 15.10a (4).

Assalāyana is silenced

17 “First, Assalāyana, you took your stand on birth [jati]; going from birth, you took a stand on the mantras; going from mantras, you took a stand on asceticism; going from asceticism, you went back to your stand on the purity of the 4 classes—which is what I have prescribed!”¹⁰⁵

17.2 When this was said, the brahmin youth Assalāyana sat cross-legged, silent, dismayed, his shoulders drooping, hanging his head, downcast and bewildered.¹⁰⁶

(2) THE ASITA DEVALA CYCLE

17.3 Then the Blessed One, understanding that the brahmin youth Assalāyana was silent, dismayed, his shoulders drooping, hanging his head, downcast and bewildered,¹⁰⁷ said this to him:

The 7 brahmin seers

18 Once upon a time,¹⁰⁸ Assalāyana, when 7 brahmin seers [rishis] were consulting one another in a leaf-hut in their forest-dwelling, a bad wrong view such as this arose to them:

18.2 ‘*The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; [155] any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā’s [God’s] own sons, the offspring from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā.*’

18.3 Now the seer **Asita Devala** [Devala the dark]¹⁰⁹ heard that
7 brahmin seers [rishis] were consulting one another in a leaf-hut in their forest-dwelling, a bad wrong view such as this arose to them:

18.4 ‘*The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā’s [God’s] own sons, the offspring from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā.*’

18.5 Then, Assalāyana, the seer Asita Devala, having, groomed his hair and beard, dressed in crimson cloths, put on multi-layered sandals,¹¹⁰ and taken his golden staff, appeared in the compound¹¹¹ of the brahmin seers.¹¹²

¹⁰⁵ *Pubbe kho tvam assalāyana jātiṃ agamāsi; jātiṃ gantvā mante agamāsi; mante gantvā tape agamāsi; tape gantvā cātu,vaṇṇiṃ suddhiṃ paccāgato, yam ahaṃ paññapemīti.* See Intro (1.2.1).

¹⁰⁶ This “defeated figure” pericope is said of Ariṭṭha (M 22.7/1:132,28-30), Saccaka (M 35.22/1:234,1-2), Sāti (M 38.6/1:258,28-30), Assalāyana (M 93.17.2/2:154), SD 40a.1, and Māra (S 4.24.11/1:124), SD 36.5.

¹⁰⁷ As noted earlier [§6.1], Assalāyana apparently sees himself only as a spokesman for the brahmins, and in fact has some respect for the Buddha [§§4.2, 4.4, 4.7]. As such, there is no “head-splitting” incident (Vajira,paṇī threatening to hurl his glowing iron at the deceptive challenger) here, as found in **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3.1.20-21/1:94 f) & SD 21.3 (4); also **Cūḷa Saccaka S** (M 35.13b/1:231), SD 26.5.

¹⁰⁸ Comy says that this was before the Buddha’s time (MA 3:411). A parallel account is found in EĀ 40.9 and Abhidharma,kośa,upāyikā-nāma Tīkā [1.2.1].

¹⁰⁹ Comy says that **Asita** mean *kālaka* (vl *kālaka*, “dark”), and Devala was his name, and he was the Buddha then (and Assalāyana was one of the brahmin seers). Comy construes this as if the Buddha were telling Assalāyana rather haughtily: “In the past, when you were of superior birth and I was of inferior birth, you could not answer a question I asked you on the birth-doctrine (*jāti, vāda*). Now here that you are inferior to me, for I have become a Buddha, how could you answer it?” (MA 3:411: this is *not* Buddha Word, but a comy gloss). The word *kālaka* prob identifies Asita with Kāla (or Kāḷa) Devala of **Indriya J** (J 423/3:466). His namesake, **Asita**, who lived to see the infant Siddhattha, is named in **Nālaka S** (Sn 3.2/679). He is the seer who prophesizes the child Siddhattha’s destiny as buddha, whom **Jātaka Nidāna** calls Kāla Devala (J 54). **Mahā, vastu**, too, mentions Asita and his prophecy, that he calls himself “Kāla of the Bhāra,dvāja clan” (Mvst 2:37).

¹¹⁰ “Multi-layered sandals,” *aṭaliyo* (pl of *aṭalī*). Ce Ee Comy *aṭaliyo*; Se *agaliyo*. Comy glosses *aṭaliyo* (S 1:226; Ap 303,10) as “of many layers (more than 4)” (*gaṇaṇ, gana*, MA 3:411; SA 1:345; cf *gaṇaṇ, gana, upāhana* at V 1:185, where Comy explains as “sandals with more than 4 linings,” VA 1083).

18.6 Then, Assalāyana, while the seer Asita Devala was walking up and down in the 7 brahmin seers' compound, he said this:

'Where now have these worthy brahmin seers gone? Where now have these worthy brahmin seers gone?'

The brahmin seers' curse fails to work

18.7 Then, Assalāyana, this occurred to the 7 brahmin seers:

'Now, who is this walking up and down in the 7 brahmin seers' compound like a village lout,¹¹³ saying thus:

"Where now have these worthy brahmin seers gone? Where now have these worthy brahmin seers gone?"

18.8 Let us put a curse on him!'

18.9 Then, Assalāyana, the 7 brahmin seers placed a curse on the seer Asita Devala, thus:

'Turn into ash, lowly wretch! Turn into ash, lowly wretch!'¹¹⁴

18.10 But, Assalāyana, the more the 7 brahmin seers cursed the seer Asita Devala, all the more comely, all the more lovely, and all the more charming, the seer Asita Devala became!¹¹⁵

18.11 Then it occurred to the 7 brahmin seers:

'Empty indeed is our asceticism!¹¹⁶ Fruitless indeed is our holy life!

18.12 Formerly, when we cursed someone, "Turn into ash, lowly wretch! Turn into ash, lowly wretch!" he indeed becomes ashes.

18.13 But the more we curse the seer Asita Devala, all the more comely, all the more lovely, and all the more charming, he becomes!

The brahmin seers are questioned

18.14 'Neither your asceticism nor your holy life, sirs, is in vain [empty]!

18.15 Come on, sirs, let go of that hatred in your hearts towards me!¹¹⁷ [156]

18.16 'We have let go of that hatred in our hearts towards you. Who are you?'

18.17 'Have you, sirs, not heard of the seer Asita Devala?'

'Yes, sir, we have.'

¹¹¹ *Patthaṇḍila*, which Comy explains as "the compound of the leaf-hut" (*paṇṇa,sāla.pariveṇa*, MA 3:411). Here, *pariveṇa* means "compound, courtyard" (its usual comy sense) rather than "cell" (as in M:H2:347 n4), which is its usu meaning in Vinaya. Later still and in our own times, it is a synecdoche for a place of learning (such as a college, esp Sinh "pirivena").

¹¹² *Atha kho assalāyana asito devalo isi kesa,massuṃ kappetvā mañjittā,vaṇṇāni dussāni nivāsetvā aṭaliyo aṭaliyo upāhanā āruhitvā jāta,rūpa,mayaṃ daṇḍaṃ gahetvā sattannaṃ brāhmaṇ'isīnaṃ patthaṇḍile pāturahosi*. On *aṭaliyo*, see n on "multi-layered sandals" above.

¹¹³ *Gāmaṇḍala,rūpo*, which Comy glosses as "like village boys" (*gāma,dāraka,rūpo*, MA 3:411). See Tha 1143, SD 20.9; so too Tha Comy (*gāma,dāraka*, ThaA 3:161 ad Tha 1143). In **Mahā Siha,nāda S** (M 12.48/1:79), it means "cowherd, peasants": see M 1:536,27 n: "cowherd boys" (*go.pāla,dāraka*), "village boys" (*gāma,dāraka*), vl *gāmaṇḍala*. PED def *gāmaṇḍala* as "'the round of an ox,' like the oxen driven round and round the threshing floor." PED also def *go,maṇḍala* (sv *go-*) as "ox-beat, ox-round." Cf "surrounded by herds of cows," *go,maṇḍala,paribbūham* (Sn 301), glossed synonymously as *go,yūthehi* [vl *-yutthehi*] *parikiṇṇam* (SnA 320); "the cow owner, seeing the cowherd," *go,sāmiko go,maṇḍalam disvā* (SA 1:31). At C 102, it is spelt *gā-*, but CA 269 has *go-* in the lemma and expl as *gāma,dāraka*. See Tha:N 281 n1143.

¹¹⁴ *Bhasmā vasala* hohi, bhasmā vasala hohī'ti*. *So Be Ce WT throughout; Ee *vasalī*; Ke Se *capalī*. Alt tr: "Be pulverized, lowly wretch!"

¹¹⁵ *Yathā yathā kho, assalāyana, satta brāhmaṇ'isayo asitaṃ devalaṃ isīṃ abhisapīṃsu tathā tathā asito devalo isi abhirūpa,taro ceva hoti dassanīya,taro ca pāsādika,taro ca*.

¹¹⁶ "Asceticism," *tapa*; here, there is a play on *tapa*, which means "asceticism, religious austerity," but its verb *tapati* means "to burn" (eg Sn 348, 687; Dh 387).

¹¹⁷ *Ingā bhavanto, yo mayi manopadoso taṃ pajahathā'ti*.

‘I, sir, am he.’

18.18 Then, Assalâyana, the 7 brahmin seers went up to the seer Asita Devala and saluted him (with joined palms).

18.19 Then the seer Asita Devala said this to the 7 brahmin seers:

‘I heard, sirs, it is said that *while 7 brahmin seers [rishis] were consulting one another in a leaf-hut in their forest-dwelling, a bad wrong view such as this arose to them:*

18.20 “*The brahmin is the best class; any other class is inferior. The brahmin is the fair class; any other class is dark. Only brahmins are pure [purified], not the non-brahmins. Brahmins are Brahmā’s [God’s] own sons, the offspring from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā.*”¹¹⁸

‘Yes, sir, it is so.’

(C) ARGUMENT FROM DESCENT

Uncertainty of the purity of descent

18.21 ‘But, sirs, do you know whether your birth mother went [consorted] with only with a brahmin, not a non-brahmin?’

‘No, sir.’

18.22 ‘But, sir, do you know whether your birth-mother’s mothers back through seven generations went only with brahmins, not with non-brahmins?’¹¹⁸

‘No, sir.’

18.23 ‘But, sir, do you know whether your birth-father went [consorted] with only a brahminee, not a non-brahminee?’

‘No, sir.’

18.24 ‘But, sir, do you know whether your birth-father’s fathers back through seven generations went with only brahminees, not non-brahminees?’

‘No, sir.’

Conditions for conception

18.25 ‘Do you know, sir, how a being-to-be-born [gandharva] descends [how conception occurs]?’

‘We do know, sir, how a being-to-be-born descends. [157]

18.26 Here, there is a coming together of the mother and father; it is the mother’s season; and there is the presence of the being-to-be-born. The meeting of these three is the descent of the being-to-be-born.¹¹⁹

18.27 But, sirs, do you know for sure if that being-to-be-born is a kshatriya, or a brahmin, or a vaishya, or a shudra?¹²⁰

‘No, sir, we do not know for sure if that being-to-be-born is a kshatriya, or a brahmin, or a vaishya, or a shudra.’

18.28 “That being the case, sirs, do you know *what* are you?”

“That being the case, sir, we do *not* know who we are!”

¹¹⁸ *Jānanti pana bhonto—yā janikā,mātu mātā yāva sattamā mātu,mātā,maha,yugā brāhmaṇaṃ yeva agamāsi, no abrahmaṇaṇ’ti?*

¹¹⁹ *Idha mātā,pitaro ca sannipatitā honti, mātā ca utunī hoti, gandhabbo ca paccupaṭṭhito hoti; evaṃ tiṇṇaṃ san-nipātā gabbhassa avakkanti hotīti.* As at M 38.26/1:265 f; S 4:400.

¹²⁰ Qu by Vasubandhu in Abhidharma,kośa (3.12, Pradhan 1967:121,22+25; 121/22-25, [Gretil ed](#)), where it is identified as the “intermediate state” (*antarā,bhava*). Note that the Buddha’s statement here confirms that *gandhabba* (its key sense) means “a being or consciousness seeking to be reborn.” It is clearly a synonym for *sambhavesī* (“a being seeking birth”) (M 38.15/1:261; S 12.64.2-3/2:101; Sn 147/26 = Khp 9/8,20): see (**Karaṇīya**) **Metta S** (Sn 8.1) @ SD 38.3 (5.6.2) & **Is rebirth immediate**, SD 2.17 (7).

CONCLUSION

Punna the ladle-holder

18.29 “Now, Assalāyana, even these 7 brahmin seers, on being questioned, cross-questioned, pressed for an answer by the seer Asita Devala regarding their own claims of birth [*jāti*], were unable to explain it.¹²¹

18.30 What more of you here, how will you, when questioned, cross-questioned, pressed for an answer by me, on your claim about birth, be able to explain it—
you, who share the same teaching—but not Puṇṇa the ladle-holder?”¹²²

Assalāyana goes for refuge

19 When this was said, the brahmin youth Assalāyana said this to the Blessed One:

20 “Marvellous, Master Gotama! Marvellous, Master Gotama!

21 Just as if, master Gotama,
one were to place upright what had been overturned, or
were to reveal what was hidden, or
were to show the way to one who was lost, or

were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms,
in the same way, in numerous ways, the Dharma has been declared by master Gotama.

22 I go to master Gotama for refuge, to the Dharma, and to the community of monks.

23 May the master Gotama remember me as a layman who has gone to him for refuge from this day forth for life.”¹²³

— evaṃ —

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¹²¹ *Te hi nāma assalāyana satta brāhmaṇ'isayo asitena devalena isinā sake jāti, vāde samanuyuñjīyamānā samannuggāhīyamānā samanubhāsīyamānā na sampāyissanti.*

¹²² *Yesaṃ tvaṃ s'ācariyako na puṇṇo dabbi, gāhōti.* Comy explains that **Puṇṇa** was the name of a servant of the 7 brahmin seers. Using a ladle, he cooked some leaves. He knew the art of handling a ladle. However, he was not one of the teachers that Assalāyana has. As such, Assalāyana does not even know the art of ladle-handling! (MA 3:412). Pv Comy gives *kaṭacchu* (“ladle, serving-spoon”) as a synonym for *dabbi* (PvA 135). *Dabbi, gāhā* occurs in **Aṅkura Pv** (Pv 21.54/310/35). The phrase *s'ācariyako* also occurs in **Udumbarikā S** (D 25,19.6/3:52), SD 1.4.

¹²³ Other than this ritual going for refuge, which is prob a social convention for graciously admitting defeat in a debate, there is no record of Assalāyana practising as a Buddhist: see **Majjhima Jīvaka S** (M 55), SD 43.4 (4.2.3). See Intro (1.2.1).

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